

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 024334

EXDIS ROME: FOR AMBASSADOR LODGE'S OFFICE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, LE, VT

SUBJECT: VATICAN STATEMENT ON LEBANESE CRISIS

REF: (A) ROME 1231, (B) ROME 1523

1. BEIRUT: PLEASE REPEAT RELEVANT CABLES TO ROME OR PROVIDE UPDATED DESCRIPTION OF FORMULAS NEEDED BY VATICAN (ROME 1523) RE CEASEFIRE ARRANGEMENTS AND LIKELY ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL SETTLEMENT.

2. ROME: AS REGARDS CASAROLI'S WISH TO KNOW USG VIEWS ON FORMULA FOR LONGER TERM SOLUTION (ROME 1231), WE HESITATE TO COMMENT DEFINITELY ON THE INDIVIDUAL POINTS WHICH APPARENTLY ARE STILL BEING DEBATED BY VARIOUS FACTIONS IN LEBANON. IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, THEY APPEAR TO US TO CONSTITUTE IN THEIR TOTALITY A REASONABLE AND RATIONAL BASIS FOR WORKING OUT MODIFICATION OF THE POLITICAL BALANCE BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS IN A WAY THAT WOULD PROTECT THE LONG-TERM SECURITY OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY. THE
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PROVISION FOR A 50-50 CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM DIVISION OF

PARLIAMENT, IN LIEU OF THE PRESENT 55-45 PROPORTION
FAVORING CHRISTIAN SIDE, IS IN OUR JUDGMENT THE MINIMUM
CONCESSION THE MUSLIM MODERATES WOULD ACCEPT.

3. ANOTHER POINT CALLING FOR THE REFORMED PARLIAMENT
TO IN EFFECT ELECT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL ALTER POWER
BALANCE BETWEEN PRESIDENT ON ONE SIDE AND PRIME MINISTER AND
PARLIAMENT ON THE OTHER. THE PRESIDENCY WILL, HOWEVER,
REMAIN IN CHRISTIAN HANDS. AS WE UNDERSTAND THE ARRANGEMENTS,
THEY PROVIDE FOR THE PRESIDENT TO RETAIN A GREAT
DEAL OF EXECUTIVE POWER AND NOT BECOME A FIGUREHEAD OR
CEREMONIAL CHIEF OF STATE.

4. FOR THESE REASONS WE BELIEVE THAT HIS HOLINESS COULD
SAFELY ENCOURAGE EFFORTS TOWARDS POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION
OF THE KIND SO FAR SURFACED. KISSINGER

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